



21st National Veterans Wheelchair Games

# New York Minute

July 1-5, 2001 ~ New York City



**T H U R S D A Y**

**J u l y 5, 2 0 0 1**

**Today's  
Weather: 80°**

Thunderstorms possible  
with periods of sun and  
clouds

**9 Ball - The Balls Roll Funny**  
page 2

**Event Schedule**  
page 2

**Women Veterans Take to  
the Games**  
page 3

**Medical Assistance**  
page 4

**Wheelchair Repair**  
page 4

**Today's Menu**  
page 4

## SLED HOCKEY CHALLENGES NOVICES AND OLD PRO'S

*By Stuart Salembier*

The Sled Hockey exhibition at Chelsea Piers illustrated that for both young and old, this exciting new sport will test your skills.

This event featured a training camp on one ice rink with opportunities to learn the basics of sled hockey. The other

rink featured an exhibition game between more experienced players. The training camp offered novices their first chance to try their hand at hockey. Many athletes found themselves very adept as they began to maneuver more efficiently. From standard hockey drills to an eventual scrimmage, the novice athletes seized the opportunity to improve their sled hockey skills. More experienced athletes duked it out in a red on white game. Competition was intense with both teams striving to defeat the other. The eventual end was a shoot-out with the white team winning. The group was a mix of members from chapters nationwide.

Sled hockey is a sport which varies in a few ways from traditional ice hockey. The sport is played on a sled with two blades and a bucket



seat for the athlete. Padding is similar with many athletes wearing less low-body cushioning due to the protection afforded by the bucket. Sticks are approximately three feet in length with picks on the end for propulsion. Rules and other logistical elements do not vary with athletes checking and balancing with the same vigor as their able-bodied counterparts. Turning and holding your edge are just as important with the sled hockey contestants reaching fairly high speeds.

Although the end "goal" was not necessarily a medal, the competing veterans at the sled hockey exhibition showed us once more that any sport can be adapted to an exciting one for wheelchair users.

# 9-BALL - THE BALLS ROLL FUNNY

by John Mazzulla

Ask any of the 60 plus billiards players why they compete in billiards and you will hear many different reasons. Jose Rodrigues from the Bronx, who has played billiards since he was a teenager and has competed in the Games for the last 14 years notes that playing and winning builds self-esteem. "Playing against disabled and able-bodied pool players and winning gave me confidence again," says Rodrigues. "It's a serious game with serious players. We are all friends, like family really, but when we get to the tables we are competitors."

The cue sticks were moving, the bridges were sliding and the sound of balls hitting banks and dropping into pockets was the scene at Monday morning's class-two and -three billiards competition. Ria Katz, general manager, at Corner Billiards, suggested that billiards was mostly a game of skill. "All tables are different, the lights are different and concentration is different. There is something about the differences that gives luck a

factor in the game."

"To do better than the next fellow helps and teaches me to strive in everyday life," commented John Taylor of Cooper City, Tex. He admits to the competitive nature of billiards, but believes the competition is within himself. "Competition is interacting with the world".

Melvin Blackwell, a recreation therapist from the Cleveland VA Medical Center thinks it's a game of thinking and skill. "It's a game of concentration... which shot to take, positioning the cue ball for the next shot and making the most of the roll of the balls."

Irv Czesek, who was hooked on the Games since he played his first in 1988, thinks billiard is competition, it's friendship and it's a little luck, too. Also a competitor in the Golden Age Games, Gzesk, who is from Libertyville, Ill. believes, "friendships grow from the years of playing against familiar faces. We all know each other and it's good to see guys progressing with their game and their lives."

Clarence Steele, a ninth year veteran of the NVWG feels it's a game of strategy. "You play guys from all over the country with different styles and different methods but one thing is the same. That one thing is that we all want the top medal. We all want the gold." When asked about luck, Steele states, "It's a fun game, a fast game and yes, a game of luck, too."

Jim Dougherty of New Milford, PA, played the game growing up. "Every day is different, sometimes you play well and sometimes you lose to someone who hasn't played nearly as long. 9-ball is a quick game and a lucky game-the balls roll funny".



## 21ST NATIONAL VETERAN SCHEDULE OF EVENTS THURSDAY JULY 5

TIME	EVENT
6AM-9AM	BREAKFAST
8AM	WEIGHTLIFTING
9AM	SWIM
	MOTOR RALLY
	5K ROAD RACE
11AM-1PM	LUNCH
1PM	BASKETBALL FINALS
3PM	BASKETBALL FINALS
7PM	CLOSING BANQUET

## TRANSPORTATION SCHEDULE

All buses depart from the 45th Street side

TIME	EVENT
6:30AM-1PM	MOTOR RALLY/5K
6:30AM-5PM	SWIMMING/BASKETBALL

WOMEN VETERANS TAKE TO THE GAMES

By Dianne Renzulli

It wasn't until Saturday that Bonnie Sampsell and Ethel Brown, both members of the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association, met for the first time. Sampsell was back for a fourth run at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG), while Brown was entering the competition for the first time. By Monday's motorized slalom competition, they had become friends – a source of camaraderie and support for each other.

"Like I told Bonnie, I can't hold you up if you fall, and you can't hold me, but we can both boost each other up," said Brown.

At this year's Games, women are finding even more support

from their fellow female athletes than ever before. With a record 41 women registered for competition, Sampsell and Brown are in good company.

"In my four years of competing at the Games, I've seen the most women ever this year and I'm glad to see them out there," said Sampsell. She explained that it took her a while to warm up to the idea of competing in her first year. "I had it in mind that the Games were more for the males than the females, but then I decided to give it a try. I got tired of staying at home." Sampsell has been living with paraplegia since 1973, and became classified as quadriplegic last year.



Bonnie Sampsell, four year veteran of the NVWG.

Sampsell, whose favorite sport is the motorized slalom, practices regularly for her sport at home. Living in the small town of Jersey Shore, Pa., she finds it easiest to train for the Games by navigating the dirt roads around her property, and planting a garden on the slope beside her house. "The motorized course is like living in the country. You've got all kinds of obstacles, and you've got to overcome them," said Sampsell. "Where there's a will, there's a way."

Brown agrees that you have to rise to life's challenges – that's why this mother of three and grandmother to six children decided to come to the Games in only the second year after she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS). "I'll try anything one time. I wanted to show my family that I can do things on my own and that they don't have to worry about me," she explained.

Brown first got inspired to come to the Games when she was attending therapy sessions at the MS Clinic at the Manhattan VA. During one of the sessions, they showed the video about the

continued on page 4

ANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES

	<b>LOCATION</b>
	MARRIOTT Skylobby Fl., 16, 23
	MARRIOTT
	RIVER BANK PARK
	CENTRAL PARK
	CENTRAL PARK
	MARRIOTT Skylobby Fl., 16, 23
	CENTRAL PARK
	RIVER BANK PARK
LS, GAME 11	RIVER BANK PARK
LS, CHAMPIONSHIP	RIVER BANK PARK
NET	MARRIOTT MARQUIS MAJESTIC CENTER

LE  
e of the Marriott

	<b>DESTINATION</b>
K ROAD RACE	CENTRAL PARK
BETBALL	RIVERBANK STATE PARK

# WOMEN VETERANS

*continued from page 3*

Games, and Brown immediately felt inspired. "I said to myself, 'I can do that!'" Brown, who lives in Brooklyn, N.Y., travels to the Brooklyn VA three times a week to keep herself in shape. She follows a routine of kaleidoscope therapy and occupational therapy.

After a hard day on her first motorized slalom course at the Games, Brown didn't feel discouraged. She found Sampsell and discussed her feelings about the course. "It was tough, but I plan on coming to the Games next year. I enjoy building my self-

esteem and knowledge that I enjoy doing something, and not feeling sorry for myself."

One of the key things that Brown feels to be encouraging at this year's competition is the number of women who are participating. "I don't see too many women on a daily basis in the Brooklyn VA, so it's good to get out and see more women," said Brown. "Even a little thing like opening a door shows a person can accomplish something."

One of the chief benefits of the Games for both Sampsell and Brown is the sharing of knowledge among athletes – giving each other tips and teaching others, especially the newly disabled. And, that's why they keep coming back. "Last year, it was my first time in a power wheelchair, and I did the whole obstacle course except one...then my chair died. The rollers from the course hit the black box on the chair and fried the battery. I was disqualified. I was heart broken," said Sampsell. But this year, she's back for more and, even more important, she's made another friend.



*Ethel Brown plans on competing next year.*



## "You Are the heroes"

Play stopped at three basketball games July 3, when NBA basketball star Mark Jackson of the New York Knicks, walked onto the courts at Riverbank State Park.

As athletes and fans gathered around the basketball superstar, Jackson said, "It's not Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant who are the heroes, you are the heroes."

Jackson also said he hoped his young son would remember the example of the wheelchair athletes when he faced the challenges and setbacks that are part of life.

Finally, he exhorted the athletes to remember, "Somebody is always watching you."

## TODAY'S MENU

### Breakfast

6:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Marriott Skylobby, Flrs 16,23

- French Toast Sticks with Cinnamon Sugar and Warm Maple Syrup
- Muffins, and Bagels with Cream Cheese, Butter, Margarine, and Preserves
- Assorted Beverages

### Lunch

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Marriott Skylobby, Flrs 16,23

Central Park

River Bank Park

- Coleslaw and Potato salad
- Deli style sandwiches on kaiser rolls
- Bags of potato chips
- Assorted beverages

### Dinner

7pm

Marriott Marquis Majestic Center

- Closing Ceremony